

## AmeriCorps\*VISTA Progress Report

**Legal Applicant:** Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**Project Name:** Wisconsin DPI VISTA Project

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**Grant Number:** 06VSNWI009

**Period Covered by this Report:**

**From: 04/01/2009 to 06/30/2009**

### Data Updates

# of VISTA Members on board at end of reporting period	17
# of Community Volunteers serving who are Baby Boomers	88
Dollar value of cash resources developed by VISTA Members	13682
# of Service Hours performed by Community Volunteers	4395
Dollar value of non-cash resources developed by VISTA Members	335724
# of VISTA Members supported by cost share	0
# of Community Volunteers serving	707

### Member and Sponsor Development

	Americorps *VISTA Members	Supervisors	CNCS Funded	Funded by Other Source	Comments
On-Site Orientation	19	19	Y	Y	
Community Outreach	17	5	N	Y	
Community Volunteer Generation/Recruitment	15	0	N	Y	
Effective Volunteer Management	15	0	N	Y	
Resource Mapping	0	0	N	N	
Resource Development/Fundraising	5	5	N	Y	
Grant Writing	0	0	N	N	
Organizational Development	17	25	N	Y	
Performance Measures	17	25	Y	Y	
Tracking Systems	17	0	Y	N	
Information Technology	17	17	Y	Y	
Developing On-Site Orientations and Training Plans		40	Y	Y	
Other (Please Specify)	17	17	Y	Y	Parent Leadership Conference- Partnerships Sustainability VISTA Retreat- Reflection

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### Project Plan

**Service Category:** Other Education

#### Goals

The goal is to build capacity for establishing a research-based, effective, sustainable program of family-school-community partnerships in schools serving low-income children and their families.

VISTA members will serve as facilitators to help schools to establish Action Team for Partnership (ATP). The VISTAs and ATP members will receive training and support to engage families, school staff, and others to develop a family-school-community partnership infrastructure, following a research-based approach using the Six Types of Involvement.

#### Service Activities

Complete training in the Action Team for Partnerships process

Conduct assets map for school community

Survey Parents and Teachers on family involvement for baseline data

With supervisor and other leaders, facilitate the establishment of ATP (must have ownership of community) and help train ATP members.

Share assets map with ATP and facilitate additional data gathering, including the Starting Points Inventory on strengths of school partnerships

Provide support for the work of the ATP to get it firmly established, beginning with the development of a one-year action plan of partnership activities and practices that address school goals and include the Six Types of Partnerships (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community).

Support the ATP in holding regular meetings and work with it to accomplish the work plan, including recruiting volunteers and participants at events and activities.

Monitor the results of the ATP.

With ATP, organize and hold end-of-year celebration

With supervisor, complete biweekly and quarterly reports to DPI.

Survey parents and staff at end of school year to compare to baseline data.

With supervisor, complete end-of-year UPDATE for the National Network of Partnership Schools.

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
<b>Results</b>		
	Action Teams for Partnerships established. ATP members are trained.	
<b>Planned Period of Accomplishment</b>		<b>Actual Period of Accomplishment</b>
Q1-2		Q2
<b>Indicator</b>		
	Number of sites with Action Teams formed.	
<b>Target # (number) or % (percent)</b>		<b>Actual # or % to date</b>
100 %		100
<b>How Measured</b>		
	Sign-in sheet	
<b>Description of Data Collection</b>		
	Membership list, which includes at least 2 parents, 2 teachers, and 2 other staff.	
<b>Progress this Reporting Period</b>		
	All VISTAs are working with functional teams that will be sustaining the VISTA efforts after the VISTA completes his or her service. The school district of Rhinelander is supporting a district action team in addition to school based teams. The Action Team at the Business and Economics Academy of Milwaukee is in its third year of development.	

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Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
<b>Results</b>		
VISTAs map community assets and collect data on school climate.		
<b>Planned Period of Accomplishment</b>		<b>Actual Period of Accomplishment</b>
Q1		Q1 and Q2
<b>Indicator</b>		
Number of community asset maps submitted to DPI.		
<b>Target # (number) or % (percent)</b>		<b>Actual # or % to date</b>
100 %		100
<b>How Measured</b>		
Community Partner Survey		
<b>Description of Data Collection</b>		
community asset mapping		
<b>Progress this Reporting Period</b>		
All VISTAs have completed and submitted Asset Maps that indicate local resources. These maps are used throughout their service year to strengthen community partnerships and sustain efforts.		

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
<b>Results</b>		
VISTAs submit grants and procure in-kind donations for ATP programs and initiatives.		
<b>Planned Period of Accomplishment</b>		<b>Actual Period of Accomplishment</b>
Q1-4		Q1-4
<b>Indicator</b>		
Number of grants submitted.		
<b>Target # (number) or % (percent)</b>		<b>Actual # or % to date</b>
20 #		20
<b>How Measured</b>		
Sustainability Checklist		
<b>Description of Data Collection</b>		
Pre/post surveys, bi-weekly and quarterly reports, and community asset map will also be used. Twelve grants will have been written and submitted by VISTAs.		
<b>Progress this Reporting Period</b>		
VISTAs continue to write grants to help sustain their programs and provide resources to their sites. Chris Briggs in Wausau has written and submitted four grants to local businesses to support family programming and Kelly Karls in Green Bay has written a \$10,000 foundation grant to begin a before-school program at the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center.		

Result Type	Intermediate Outcome	Performance Measure : X
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### Results

Sites will implement family-school-community practices that address their school's goals to improve academic achievement.

#### Planned Period of Accomplishment

Q1-4

#### Actual Period of Accomplishment

Q1-4

#### Indicator

Number of activities/practices implemented.

#### Target # (number) or % (percent)

120 #

#### Actual # or % to date

120

#### How Measured

Activity log

#### Description of Data Collection

Action Plans and agendas of activities, as well as project descriptions, will be submitted by the VISTAs in bi-weekly and quarterly reports. Each VISTA will coordinate at least six family-school-community events or initiatives.

#### Progress this Reporting Period

VISTAs each facilitated at least one family partnership event this Quarter. Casey Gauthier in Rhinelander hosted an Absolutely Incredible Kid Day where families could celebrate together with community members and school staff. Brendan Gants organized a Spring Fling event in Milwaukee for parents that focused on developing math and science skills at home. Penny Bruskin, serving at the Milwaukee Public Library facilitated a Spring into Family Fun event that provided families with literacy resources to use at home over the summer. Finally, Renee Pasewald in Oshkosh organized a Summer Opportunities Fair for families to learn of the community resources and programs their child could participate in over the summer months.

### Result Type

### End Outcome

### Performance Measure : X

### Results

Schools will have an identified process for partnerships that includes the Action Team for Partnerships.

#### Planned Period of Accomplishment

end of school year

#### Actual Period of Accomplishment

Q3

#### Indicator

Percent of Action Teams that have started work on next year action plan.

#### Target # (number) or % (percent)

100 %

#### Actual # or % to date

100

#### How Measured

NA

#### Description of Data Collection

By end of year, all sites will have started plans for next year. Instrument: Year-end UPDATE form completed and returned to the DPI and the NNPS for analysis.

#### Progress this Reporting Period

All sites have submitted copies of their action plan for the 2009-2010 school year along with an NNPS UPDATE form that indicates their progress on partnerships for the current year and their goals for the next.

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Result Type	End Outcome	Performance Measure : X
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### Results

More parents will feel welcome in their children's school, have an understanding of the importance of being involved in their children's learning, and know how to participate to help their children.

#### Planned Period of Accomplishment

school year

#### Actual Period of Accomplishment

Q3

#### Indicator

Increase in the percent of parents indicating positive attitudes on end of year survey

#### Target # (number) or % (percent)

20 %

#### Actual # or % to date

70

#### How Measured

Pre/Post test

#### Description of Data Collection

VISTAs will randomly survey at least 25 parents at the beginning of the school year with a base-line survey and then again at the end of the school year.

#### Progress this Reporting Period

Parent surveys indicated a positive increase in the attitudes towards schools and their partnership programs. Nearly 70% of our sites report making good progress on meeting the challenges identified at their school. 100% of schools are making fair or good progress on communicating to all families, including non English speaking families. 100% of schools report success in recruiting, training and supporting parent/community volunteers. At Lincoln Elementary School in Oshkosh, 70% of respondents said this year Lincoln offered more parental involvement opportunities than the previous year. The Wausau Early Childhood Program reported that 96% percent of respondents Strongly Agreed or Agreed that there are sufficient opportunities for family involvement.

## Narratives

### Challenges

A continual challenge that faces a multi site project with VISTAs throughout the state is engaging them in the ownership of the program. While we ask for feedback regularly throughout the year and strive to develop a culture of free exchange between VISTAs and project staff, it is important that are able to invite VISTAs to participate in decision making and program development.

This quarter we held our second annual VISTA Focus Group with members throughout the state. This meeting was an in depth look at our programs, our policies, our successes and challenges throughout the year and included VISTAs, our VISTA Leader, our soon to be VISTA Leader, our Project Coordinator and Project Director. We talked about how we might structure training, communication, and progress monitoring for the next year of the project. VISTAs were able to share their own experiences and came prepared to answer the question, "if I could create the perfect program, what would it look like?"

This feedback, coupled with the exit surveys all VISTAs will receive in early August will help us shape the program for next year and retain buy in of the members. It is the VISTAs' program as much as it is DPI's and as much as it is the communities and we are working to make sure they feel that way.

### Recruitment

Recruitment this Quarter was a big success for our project. We were able to fill all Classic and Recovery slots to begin this summer (2 in July and 21 in August). This means our project will be serving schools, districts, family resource centers and libraries throughout the state to develop sustainable community partnerships and increase capacity to serve low income families.

We recruited more "local" candidates than in years past- particularly with our Recovery program with public libraries. These individuals knows their communities well and are eager to make a difference in their own hometowns.

Our VISTA Leader, Casey Gauthier, was critical in our recruitment success as she promoted our program through various media and online forums. She helped to screen and interview candidates along with providing all candidates with information on our project and on our expectations for all VISTAs.

Finally, we finalized the recruitment of a second VISTA Leader, Penny Bruskin, who will begin her service in late August. Penny is serving this year with our project at the Milwaukee Public Library and we are eager to bring her on board to help develop our library program and provide insight and support to new and continuing members.

### Training/Technical Assistance Needs

VISTAs requested training and technical assistance in the following areas this quarter:

- Sustainability
- Reflection
- Life After VISTA
- Action Plan writing

We were able to meet these requests through webinars, newsletter, conferences and the first annual VISTA retreat, held in early July. In particular, the Life After VISTA webinar allowed current members to interact with VISTA alumni and discuss career paths and using the education award.

### Partnership/Collaboration Development

The DPI VISTA Project is working to continue strengthening partnerships with

- VISTA projects at Admission Possible and Wisconsin Campus Compact
- Parents Plus
- Other teams at DPI
- VISTA Alumni

Our Life After VISTA webinar allowed us to strengthen our connection with DPI VISTA Project alumni and led us to begin to develop an Alumni Network to benefit both current and former VISTA members.

## Narratives

Additionally, we have partnered with Team Nutrition here at DPI along with our VISTA in Spooner and AmeriCorps Farm to School members to create a frugal and family-friendly cookbook we can distribute to national service members and families in low income communities across the state. This cookbook will be made available online and FREE at local schools, libraries and community centers. Submissions were received from families, VISTAs, AmeriCorps members, and DPI staff.

### Resource Development

Resource Development is an area where our VISTAs excel. They work hard to secure donations and grants to help develop and sustain their programs. Chris Briggs, Kelly Karls, Brendan Gants, Stephanie Jung, and Robyn Krimke in particular have had incredible success as securing donations and grants for their sites in Wausau, Green Bay, and Milwaukee. We are in the process of asking them to put together some tips for new VISTAs on the best way to secure in kind donations and monetary resources so that their skills can benefit future VISTAs.

Additionally, one of our VISTA Recovery Site Supervisor has secured housing for his VISTA member free of charge for the duration of her service year. This is a great asset for our program.

This coming year we would like to pursue a VISTA friendly business program along with generating more in kind donations to help the program grow and expand. Businesses would be contacted to provide discounts to national service members based on their income levels. Ideally, this could be a collaborative effort between other projects in the state.

### Sustainability

Sustainability continues to be our top priority for our project. We are developing tools to assist our VISTAs in thinking about sustaining their work from the beginning of the year. In June we held the second of our two part Sustainability Webinar series, to talk about systems VISTAs are putting in place to transfer ownership to others at their site. We also reviewed the Sustainability Worksheet which we will use to transition new VISTAs, staff, or volunteers to the work the VISTAs have done.

Sustainability is something we have been able to emphasize with all sites, particularly those who are just beginning with our project. We held two webinars for new host sites and began the conversation about sustainability. These webinars allowed current supervisors to share their experiences with incoming supervisors, particularly how they are planning for life without a VISTA from day one.

Finally, we are exploring the idea of using former VISTA sites to act as mentors for new sites and guide them through the process of working with the VISTA project and building sustainable programs. We hope this ownership and buy-in at the local level will prove to be effective.

### Multi-Site Performance

We continually emphasize to our VISTAs and Supervisors that THEIR success is OUR success. In order for us to acknowledge their success and reinforce it, we need effective tools of assessment and communication.

We communicate with the VISTA members in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- VISTA Blog
- Monthly Teleconferences/Webinars
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator and VISTA Leader
- Site Visits
- Exit Surveys

We communicate with the VISTA Supervisors in the following ways:

## Narratives

Bi-Weekly Reports  
Quarterly Reports  
Written feedback on all reports  
Bi-monthly Teleconferences  
VISTA Project List-serv  
Monthly Newsletters (featuring a Supervisor Segment)  
Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator  
Site Visits  
Exit Surveys

This Quarter we have launched our first evaluation project, to assess the effectiveness of our VISTA project over the past 11 years. Two of our VISTA members have been recruited to contact former VISTA sites and conduct a phone interview to determine the impact that the VISTA had on their site. Sites are asked what programs are still in place that the VISTA set up as well as why they think the VISTA was (or was not) successful in their community. Most interviews were conducted with Principals but some with other school staff.

This data has been collected and we anticipate doing a formal write up this next quarter with the results of the surveys. This is an ongoing project and will help inform materials and resources that we develop and distribute to our sites. We have learned that our VISTAs HAVE had an impact on the sites they have served and some of the most successful sites had a supportive supervisor and the buy-in of the community.

### Other Accomplishments

Successful recruitment for all of our sites was one of our biggest accomplishments this quarter, however, we are also particularly excited about the summer program we launched in June.

19 summer VISTAs are serving throughout the state in non profits, schools, and libraries to develop summer programming, build community partnerships, and tutor students. This program will enable the DPI VISTA Project to kick off a "summer of service" in conjunction with President Obama's United We Serve initiative.

VISTAs are serving in Madison, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Woodville, Ashland, Shiocton, Racine, Sheboygan, and Arbor Vitae Woodruff.

We were able to provide orientation to these members and supervisors along with technical assistance and feedback on mid term and end of term reports. Please see Stories of Service from our Summer VISTA Associates in the attachments.

### Stories

Brendan Gants  
Business and Economics Academy of Milwaukee  
Milwaukee, WI

The biggest success of all was the "Spring Fling" Family Math and Science Night. Turnout was excellent, with over 200 parents and students in attendance. The event also ran very smoothly, with a teacher volunteer at every activity table and the "passport to learn" providing a good structure to keep people moving through the activities. It was great to see so many students and parents learning together and having fun with math and science, and the "mathemagician" was also a big hit.

Kelly Karls  
Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center  
Green Bay, WI

The major success of the last quarter would be the planning and implementation of our SuperSummer program. Because the resource center has not had a summer camp in many years, we were essentially starting from scratch on this one. However, through a grant made possible by Procter and Gamble, we were able to have the resources to begin planning successful summer enrichment activities. The program has helped children stay active during the summer months and has lead to new partnerships between the resource center and different community members or organizations.

Kim Yoder



## Narratives

Kosciusko Montessori School  
Milwaukee, WI

One success was Muffins for Moms. We had over 60 parents (mainly mothers) attend the event and really enjoyed themselves. Local museums and businesses donate raffle prizes for the mothers, which were greatly appreciated.. Also, two local bakeries donated the muffins and staff participated by serving that morning as well as donating juice for the event. We had two community resources attend the event. North Shore Bank set up a booth in the cafeteria with gifts for parents as well as information on different accounts they can open for themselves as well as accounts for their children. The Forest Home Library also attended the event and shared information on their summer programming as well as information on how to get a library card.

Dustin Young  
Dane County Transitional School  
Madison, WI

We are working on building stronger student, parent, and alumni connections. We are implementing this in three stages: 1) We have established a presence on popular social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Idealist.org); 2) We are laying the groundwork for the SUCCESS communication network, where students, parents/guardians, and alumni can share opportunities, resources, and advice; 3) Continuing Action Team meetings. These are invaluable resource for promoting, sustaining, and advancing the goals of DCTS, if they are launched effectively and utilized by all stakeholders in the DCTS network. It provides a comprehensive and multifaceted solution to the problem of communication between families, students, and community members who are not in close proximity.

Kelly Martyka  
South Madison Health and Family Center  
Madison, WI

The volunteer corps that we have built is amazing. They are diligent at their work and love what they do. They enjoy working with the projects we have and, most of all, they enjoy working with each other. It's a pleasure to have them come in each day and have a good time, while still helping the community. They often bring in donations or just a positive attitude boost. I was a little worried when the school year ended and we lost a lot of volunteers, but through VolunteerYourTime.org we have been to able to build an even stronger, even more wonderful group of volunteers. I couldn't thank them enough for the pride they have in coming each day to volunteer at the Harambee Center. It is a wonderful feeling to have reliable, friendly volunteers.

Chad Olle  
Dottke Alternative High School  
West Allis, WI

Dottke's 25th Anniversary Celebration was a success. Between parents, alumni, staff and students, we had approximately 160 people attend. It's hard to measure how big of an effect the Action Team had on the turnout but I think the AT was instrumental. The AT parents used the letter I drafted to go into the community and collect donations to be used as door prizes at the event. The door prizes were key in promoting the celebration to Dottke's families and the public. The AT parents also had a phone call session in which they called every Dottke household to personally invite them to the event. On the night of the event, three parents set up a booth to hand out information and answer questions about the AT and what we have accomplished this year. We had nine combined parents, alumni, and community members sign up to receive more information about the Action Team.

## Attachments and Links

April Newsletter  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr04-09.pdf>

May Newsletter  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr05-09.pdf>

June Newsletter  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/vnwsltr06-09.pdf>

What Does an AmeriCorps VISTA do? (Video by VISTA Matt Dolezal)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcIkrJz5iHo>

## **Narratives**

Article on the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center, Green Bay

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/article/20090714/GPG0101/907140489&referrer=FRONTPAGECAROUSEL>

Article on Milwaukee Corrective Action Plan

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/48569007.html>

Arne Duncan on the Role of Libraries in Economic Recovery

<http://www.ala.org/ala/online/resources/selectedarticles/arneduncaninterview0630.cfm>

Emailed to Program Officer:

Compiled Quarterly Reports

DPI VISTA Powerpoint: Year in Review

Sustainability Worksheet

Life After VISTA Powerpoint

Sustainability Powerpoint

Parent Leadership Conference Agenda

DPI VISTA Promising Partnership practices (submitted to NNPS for publication)

DPI Summer VISTA Associates Stories of Service